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Grade 10, Age 15

The Free Spirit of Spring, and the Eagle

A metal bird, a lot of hairy men what is this, why are they taking me away from my home? I woke up screaming "Istaaaa! "(Mocom) as my mother came running into the room saying "Nahoten? Nahoten? Onsaserenhtaksenne ken?"(What? What? Did you get a nightmare?) I replied "Hen, "(Yes) She held me in her arms, and asked me, "Nahoten onsatetshen?" (What did you dream about?) I told her about the hairy men that took five kids all were my friends. They took us to a big building that had a dying maple tree in front of it. I asked her if she knew anything about it and she told me that the building was a school, and the hairy men were white men that took kids to this school.

Two weeks into summer we saw that big metal bird the same one in my dream. We were all fascinated with it. When it landed, we all kept quiet until five men came in, bursting out of there grabbing me and five of my friends putting us in the metal bird. I was screaming, and crying for my parents to help me, "Ista, Rakeni taksnie: non!" and at that moment I heard my parents speak English for the first time in my life, "Please sir don't take our daughter away". But the hairy man kept walking into the metal bird. When we got up into the air two of my friends jumped out of the metal bird and landed in the water where their parents picked them up in a canoe, and took them home, "Shit two of them jumped out". As one of the men spook these weird words I started to miss my parents, and I cried. "Kokwitene satsketsko". (Spring wake up) I woke up, I never even noticed when I went to sleep, and I looked outside, and noticed that we were at that big building with the dying maple tree. "Well look here kiddies we're at your new `one". As I looked outside I saw people who looked like ants, looking for sugar, and rebuilding their homes after winter.

"Welcome to. My name is Father Isaac." Then the woman beside him said, "Hi my name is Sister Mary". Well, let's get these girls inside, shall we Sister?" "Yes let's get them out of those filthy cloths, and washed up. "When we got inside they took us to this room where they cut my hair up to my shoulder. "Iah to: sha satsteri: st akenonkwis. "(No! Don't touch my hair.) "No no don't speak that dirty language. Come sit down". As I sat down she continued to cut my hair I felt my parent's spirit begin to fade away with the wind.

During the next year I've seen pain, and suffering in my dreams, and as hard as I tried I couldn't remember my name, and my culture all I remember is a little bit of my language. "Hey! Catharine are you trying to run away again?" "No Sister Mary, I'm just trying to think of my home. When will I see it again Sister". "I don't know Catharine, but try not to think so hard about it". "Ok". "Ok let's go down stairs, and eat." As I walked in front of her she grabbed my butt, I screamed, "What are you doing!?" "Silent child". As I yelled back at her she hit me, and I fell down a set of staircases. "Now you filthy savage stay down there". As she closed the door I felt as if I was just killed. When I looked up I saw a couple of my friends come down stairs. They told me that my parents were here looking for me, but Father Isaac told them that I wasn't here. That's when I understood why Sister Mary locked me down here. Two days after Father Isaac found me down here while he was getting some meat for the night, and he brought me to the hospital. When I got out I went back to the school, I found out that Sister Mary died in her sleep, when I heard this I was pretty happy.

Two weeks after something happened to me I was bleeding from between my legs I asked some of my friends, and they told me to go see Sister Isabelle, so I went she told me that it was unladylike to go around saying that she also told me to go to the hospital they'd tell me what to do, I knew what that bleeding meant; it meant that I was becoming a young woman now, and that I should do a ceremony to welcome the womanhood spirit into my body.

When I was pretty fluent in the English language I started to read maps, and I found out where I lived that's when I asked some of my friends if they wanted to go home. Five of us left that night, as we left it was just becoming spring time, and now that I'm a young lady I have way more stronger powers with the spirit living inside me so that night when we left the school we prayed in Mohawk for the spirit of the maple tree in the yard, but on our way out of the fence we were caught by Father Isaac, and that night he also heard us speaking in our native tongue, and that night he beat us with a sticks and whips for running away and for speaking Mohawk. Two nights later we tried again, and the same thing happened this time we were weaker to do anything, so we waited for two weeks to pass then we tried again same thing happened we got caught, but this time we were ready we stole Father Isaac's stick and we beat him with then we got everybody out of the school, except the father, and all the sisters, and we burnt the school down to the ground. Then we walked home.

It took us two years to get home, but we got there, but nobody remembered us. We were all dressed like white women we didn't know a single word in Mohawk anymore I started to feel as if I was losing a big part of me. We didn't know Mohawk we didn't know who our parents were, they didn't know who we were, and I didn't know my culture. It felt as if I was dying. When I left I saw an eagle, and that's when I started to feel as if I was becoming white. When I woke up from my short death I saw that eagle, and I started to remember, "Kokwitene, Kokwitene.... "(Spring, Spring) it was spring time the flowers were in bloom, and the trees were talking to each other, I finally felt like myself again, I felt free just like the eagle spirit.

I was home; I was free just like KOKWITENE (SPRING)